



**TESTIMONY TO SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE**

SB 762 - Education – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The by-laws of the League of Women Voters of the United States say, “*the purposes of the LWVUS shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government...*” Fostering a knowledge of how government works and how to impact public policy, as well as how to become engaged in one’s community to make it better for its residents, is essential to our mission and this legislation provides an incentive for young people and their schools to do just that.

Establishing a Seal of Civic engagement and a recognition program for schools which have a high participation rate among graduating seniors, would send a message that civic engagement is a worthy endeavor and should be recognized as a valuable achievement.

Civic education can occur in many settings beyond the school day, such volunteering with service organizations, participating in political rallies and campaigns, registering voters and working at polling places on Election Day.

Ensuring the future of our democratic republic is dependent on fostering civic knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. Maryland students who excel academically in social studies and exceed expectations in volunteer and service-learning should be recognized for their achievements. This recognition could serve as a concrete signal to colleges and employers that students who have earned the Seal are ready to be productive members of their college community or their workplace.

We urge a favorable report on SB 762.